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REMARKS

Applicants cancel claim 2. Claims 1 and 3-16 remain pending in the application.

Applicants amend claims 1 and 10 to incorporate features that correspond to those of canceled claim 2, and amend claims 4 and 6 to independent form. No new matter has been added.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge the receipt of all certified copies of priority documents.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's finding that claims 2 and 4-7 contain allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants amend claims 4 and 6 to independent form, and amend claims 1 and 10 to incorporate features that correspond to those of claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, together with claims 3 and 8-9 dependent therefrom, is patentable. Correspondingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 4, 6, and 10, together with claims 5 and 7 dependent from claims 4 and 6, respectively, are patentable. The Examiner did not address the patentability of claims 15 and 16. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 15 and 16 include features that correspond to those of claim 2, and are, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 1, 3, and 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,742,600 to Nishihara. Again, Applicants amend claims 1 and 10 to incorporate features that correspond to those of canceled claim 2, and respectfully submit that claims 1, 3, and 8-10 are, therefore, patentable.

Claims 11-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0101871 to Takase et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,711,168 to Yoshizawa et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

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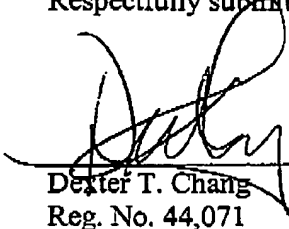
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Yoshizawa et al. was filed on October 19, 1999 and issued on March 23, 2004, and was, therefore, filed and made public after the May 28, 1999 priority date for the present application. The priority application of Yoshizawa et al. was not published until May 30, 2000 under Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2000-151609, which was also after the priority date of this application. As such, Yoshizawa et al. is not prior art to the present application. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the §103 rejection of claims 11-14.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,


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